UNITED KINGDOM
Digital masterplan launched by Manchester
An initiative that mobilises a network of Manchester ‘digital champions’ to inspire, encourage and support people to use the Internet was launched in Manchester—a city keen on becoming an ICT hub. The Go On Manchester project seeks to help people go online and assist local businesses and community organisations to develop new skills and capacities. The initiative is one part of Manchester’s ambitious digital master plan which includes a creative media centre, free wi-fi on public transport, increasing broadband penetration rates and the launch of 4G mobile phone networks.

INTERNATIONAL
Universal power adapter to cut tech waste
International Telecommunications Union members have agreed first-stage approval of a new universal power adapter technical standard for devices such as modern, set-top boxes, home networking equipment and fixed telephones. The standard will complement the union’s successful universal charging solution for mobile devices enabling further energy savings, reductions in e-waste and enhanced consumer convenience by expanding the concept’s application to the vast majority of ICT devices.

AUSTRALIA
Free city centre wi-fi introduced by Perth
The Perth City WiFi network, a temporary wireless internet service available in certain areas of the city, has been launched. The temporary service is the city’s first step towards providing a wireless internet connection for basic website browsing. Users will be able to read and send emails, update social media content, share photographs and view the latest news and events. The service is limited to 500 megabytes per user, per day. The temporary service will give the city valuable information on how to better implement and manage a larger, permanent, service with the vision of partnering with the private sector and other government organisations.

INTERNATIONAL
Finalists announced for most innovative city
New York, Medellin and Tel Aviv are the three most innovative cities, according to the results of a public poll and selections made by the Urban Land Institute, in a joint initiative with Citi and the Wall Street Journal. The three cities will now have to wait for the results of an online poll, open to the public until January 2013, to see which will be awarded as the top city for innovation. The award recognises a city’s ability to adapt and re-invent itself as well as its ability to integrate and influence global culture, innovation and growth.

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INTERNATIONAL
New software helps cities tap public opinion
US technology company, IBM, has unveiled a new way of measuring social sentiment based on sophisticated analytics. The company demonstrated the technology at the Smarter Cities Forum in New Delhi, India, showing how software can help cities around the world better understand public opinion on key city issues and services such as public transport and education.

With a wealth of online content and public commentary on social channels such as Twitter and Facebook, IBM believes that city officials can now look at new ways to measure positive, neutral and negative opinions shared by their citizens. The company’s analytic and natural language processing technologies, used to analyse large volumes of public social media data in order to assess and understand citizen opinions, are now available to city governments around the world via new capabilities delivered with the IBM Intelligent Operations Center for Smarter Cities.

“Like all rapidly growing cities across the world, there are infrastructure growing pains in many Indian cities,” said Guru Banavar, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, Smarter Cities, IBM. “However, when city officials can factor public sentiment—positive, negative or otherwise—around city services like transport, they can more quickly pinpoint and prioritise areas that are top of the agenda for their citizens. This could mean more targeted investment, improving a particular city service, more effective communication about a service that is offered, and even surfacing best practices and successful efforts that could be applied to other zones of a city.”

The IBM Social Sentiment Index helps companies and cities tap into consumer and citizen desires and gives them more informed decisions by looking at unfiltered consumer attitudes and actions, distinguishing between sincerity and sarcasm, and even predicting trends as they surface online.
**International**

**Electric consumption app wins ICT award**

A Facebook app that enables users to compare their energy consumption to that of their friends, family or neighbours has won the Green ICT Application Challenge, awarded by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

Andreas Kamilaris, a PhD student from the University of Cyprus received the US$3,000 prize at the ITU Green Standards Week, held in Paris.

“Social influence is an important factor that motivates people to change their lifestyles,” said Kamilaris during his demonstration of the app. “We want to reach those people that consume excessive amounts of electricity and help them understand, by means of local comparisons with their neighbours and social comparisons with their Facebook friends, that their behaviour is not normal. In other words, we want citizens to realise the ‘semantics’ of their electricity footprint.”

Kamilaris’ motivation for developing the application was to create a means of better quantifying the energy-consumption data produced by smart meters. The panel of judges—representing ITU, Telefonica, the World Meteorological Organization and the European Commission—deemed his concept the best to satisfy the Challenge’s theme of ‘Sustainable Energy for All’.

Since the app went live at the beginning of August more than 1,000 users have signed-up. The app has also drawn interest from the Cypriot Interior Minister and the Commissioner for the Environment. Electricity-related measurements will be provided by the Electricity Authority of Cyprus, which supports the project. Internationally the app has received interest from France and the Public Power Corporation in Greece.

Kamilaris said that with the European Union’s goal of installing smart meters in every household by 2020, the app would be even more beneficial due to the availability of real-time information. “Our vision complies with the future deployment of smart meters in domestic premises around the world,” he added. “Support of smart metering by Social Electricity would transform the application into a real-time platform, providing more effective comparisons and competitions related to electrical energy use.”

Honourable mentions were awarded to another four promising apps, all similarly targeting ICT-enabled energy management. From India came a standby monitor for home appliances, and from Spain a point scoring system whereby commercial activities, at all levels of the value chain, are awarded points based on the degree of their operations’ environmental sustainability.

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**New Zealand**

**Civil defence app for Auckland**

Auckland Civil Defence, a division of Auckland Council, has launched a new public alert system for the entire region to better prepare for natural disasters, which includes targeting the estimated half a million Auckland citizens using smartphones. By synchronising with the Auckland Civil Defence website in real time, the app will now allow thousands of locals to stay updated with accurate and timely information on their area such as road closures, floods, and severe wind warnings. More than 10,000 people have already downloaded the new app.

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**International**

**Book launched to help cities rebuild themselves through ICT**

The Intelligent Community Forum (ICF) is offering communities worldwide, and their mayors, municipal administrators, economic development executives and educational institutions, a new solutions playbook entitled *Seizing our destiny*. The book’s title is inspired by Riverside California, the 2012 Intelligent Community of the Year. Riverside declined in the post-industrial period to then rise again and transform its economic and social prospects in little more than a decade through ICT. Riverside’s virtual city hall access is now a model of innovation in the local government sector, in which it successfully collaborated with city, private sector and academic institutions.

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**South Africa**

**Cape Town aims for citywide broadband**

Cape Town’s Executive Mayor, Alderman Patricia de Lille, has announced an initial funding of 213 million South African rand (US$24.5 million) for the proposed roll out of broadband infrastructure throughout the metropolitan area. The city wants to boost its ICT capabilities and economic growth. The project is expected to take between seven and 10 years to complete, and is expected to cost 1.3 billion South African rand. The city hopes that by supporting the growth of telecommunication services to residents and entrepreneurs, it will create a digitally inclusive society with economic growth and boost Cape Town’s ICT credentials.

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Malcolm Johnson, Director, Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, ITU, and one of the judges, Silvia Guzmán Araña, Global Director of Sustainability, Telefónica, present the US$3,000 prize to Andreas Kamilaris